

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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DECEMBER 26, 1926

When the Kitchen God Struck

By Eva R. Baird

HERE was the smell of boiling syrup and the fragrance of New Year's candy in the Li kitchen. Li May Fun and Li May Un were stirring the sticky sweetness in the two big iron basins which fit exactly into the holes of the stove. Li May Run, who was only six, was pushing the straw which the Chinese use for fuel into the low door of the stove.

It was a most inconvenient time that Mother Li had been called away, just when the holiday candy was under way. But May Fun was sixteen and May Un was fourteen, and they had watched the candy-making process all their lives. They knew just when to pour the hot syrup over the sesame seed to make the thin wafers that they liked so well themselves, and just how to cut the candied ginger which Mother Li always saved for her most aristocratic guests.

New Year's preparations are most elaborate in Chinese homes. Everybody and everybody's cousin goes calling, and who would think of receiving callers at China New Year without sweets to offer with tea? Four kinds were really the least one could place on the table, and since Father Li was a prosperous merchant his family always had the conventional sixteen in reserve for high-class guests, and eight sitting on the table for ordinary folks.

The candy making was the last thing to be done in the Li household. The cakes and nuts and fruit were all safely put away, although it was still a full week until New Year's. To be strictly accurate, it was exactly one week until New Year's Eve, which was really the reason for the queer things that befell the Li girls that winter afternoon and evening as they finished the task their mother had undertaken.

"Where's Mother?" asked their married sister, Mrs. Chen, dropping in from her home in the country.

"Oh, she's gone with Neighbor Ling to look at a slave girl," answered May Fun. "Somebody who's hard up has to sell a

slave and Mrs. Ling thinks it's a wonderful bargain. But she wanted Mother to go and look the girl over with her."

"Well, she surely will get back before I have to start home," said young Mrs. Chen comfortably, "it's the twenty-third." May Fun and May Un looked at each other blankly.

"We never thought of it," they said in concert.

"I don't believe Mother did either," added May Un. "She never said a word about it. But we always do use some of the candy sugar for him. So maybe she did."

"I know she didn't" said May Fun, positively, "for she told me to be sure and clean everything up when we were through. Oh, dear, what shall we do? He must be sent!"



The Aeroplane

By ANNA L. CURTIS

High in the air a melodious humming,
Far in the distance a something is coming,
Nearer the motor's monotonous drumming, —

Hark, how the aeroplane sings.
Over the rooftops the creature is looming,
Flying and fluttering like a bird pluming,
Here, — then away, leaving naught but its boomerang, —

The man-bird is trying his wings.

All three of the girls by this time were looking at the chimney where stood the Kitchen God. He it was that was the cause of their distress.

The Kitchen God is not one of the important deities of China; he does not belong with the Goddess of Mercy or the Gods of Wealth and Learning. No temples are erected to him, but he reigns very humbly in every home. Fastened to the chimney in the kitchen he hears all the conversation that takes place in the home. Then at New Year's he hastens to report On High.

The manner of his departure is this. On the twenty-third of the last month of the year, the family who may not have gotten along sweetly at all during the year, smear his mouth with sugar so that his report will be sweet, and consign him to the flames which is the route he takes to Paradise. The remaining week of the year he is not in his accustomed place on the chimney, which gives wonderful freedom of speech to the family. All the year through he has been listening, listening to every idle word, and even the sugar on his mouth when he departs can scarcely sweeten the family quarrels or the evil language that has been spoken. So it is small wonder that the Kitchen God's vacation is appreciated by the family.

When New Year dawns he is back again. A bright new Kitchen God is on the chimney, ready to listen for another year.

Custom — the most unchangeable thing in Old China — decrees that the Kitchen God must depart the evening of the twenty-third and at no other time. And Mother Li had forgotten it! Small wonder that May Fun and May Un and May Run, and young Mrs. Chen who had been May Wun, all looked at each other in bewilderment. It was May Fun who came to herself first.

"Can't we do it, ourselves?" she asked.

"Of course you can," said May Wun. "I know how, I did it myself for the Chen family last year. All there is to it is to have the candy stuff just right to stick. I'll do it while you take care of the chimney."

It seemed rather a simple thing after

all, and little May Run looking up at the fat Kitchen God, said, "He's smiling."

But it was May Run's gazing up that upset the plan. She had her hands full of the straw fuel with which she was feeding the fire, and the stove door was open. Her little apron caught fire, and she would have blazed in an instant had not May Wun's quick wit saved her. Their father's winter cape of wool hung on the kitchen door, and in a flash May Wun had smothered the flames, dropping the wooden paddle in her hands to do it. May Fun, intent upon smearing the Kitchen God's mouth, realized nothing except that her sister had dropped the paddle which she instantly picked up. The Kitchen God was already in her other hand, and her purpose was to smear his mouth. But in the confusion of May Wun's sudden rescue of May Run, she daubed his feet instead and then they stuck to the chimney! If the candy had been soft when it was taken from the fire it was hard now, hard as a rock. And the Kitchen God was held fast in the Li kitchen when he should have departed to make his report On High.

"Well," said May Un, "what shall we do now?" To take him from his original place of honor, smear his lips and consign him to the flames was all a regular routine, but when a special dispensation had stuck him fast in a new place there was no rule to go by. It seemed disrespectful to snatch him down, but to leave him meant no week of freedom to say naughty words, and quarrel when you felt like it.

May Wun had to hurry home, and anyway she didn't know what to do any more than the others. They decided to wait for Mother Li's return. When she and Father Li came in together it was late. May Run was asleep in a chair, and the two older girls sat soberly watching. The candy was put away as nicely as Mother Li could have done it herself. But what would happen to a household whose Kitchen God was not properly started on his way to Paradise at the right time?

They heard the front door open and the voices of their father and mother.

"Oh, we should have had hot water for tea," suddenly remembered May Un. The kettle was at hand and May Fun quickly struck a match. The wind whirled through the opening doors, and with a flurry the dislocated Kitchen God and the lighted match collided. There was a burst of flame — the Kitchen God had gone On High.

"But his lips weren't smeared" mourned the girls, as they told the whole story.

"Good enough, good enough," said Father Li, who didn't believe much in the Kitchen God anyway. "We'll be reported just as we are this year with no sugar-coating. Maybe that will help us to the right kind of talking for next year."

Looking Ahead at the New Year

BY CLARENCE MANSFIELD LINDSAY

The chimes ring on the frosty air;

The old year's course is run;

And merry greetings everywhere

Proclaim the year begun!

With happy hearts we look ahead;

Resolved: the months to be

Shall outshine those which now are
dead,

In love and industry!

Resolved: that we shall try to speak

The word which helps a friend!

Resolved: that not alone we'll seek

Our own good, but extend

To others all the cheer we may

To soothe, to bless, to aid!

And thus for them make bright life's
way

On whom are burdens laid!

Resolved: to see the sun behind

The clouds! When things go wrong

To smile, and make of life's dull grind
A glad and joyous song!

Happy New Year

By Emma Florence Bush

"**T**HERE he is at last," cried Robert, running to the door. Yes, it was Uncle Jim. He had been away on a long journey across the ocean, and should have been home for Christmas, but on Christmas Day they received a postal saying, "Could not make the Christmas boat. Will be home for New Year's."

Robert had been watching most all day, and now at six o'clock on New Year's eve Uncle Jim had come.

There was so much to hear that mother said Robert might sit up for an hour after his usual bedtime, and even then he did not want to go to bed.

"Come, come," said Uncle Jim; "this will never, never do. I am leaving a box of candy on the dining-room table for the first member of the family who wishes me a Happy New Year," and he looked at mother and smiled, for they both knew that Baby May was too tiny to think of New Year's, and that six-year-old Robert was a very early riser when there was something to get up for.

Robert lay awake for some time after he went to bed. "I will just lie still until the New Year bells ring," he said, "then I will slip into Uncle Jim's room and wish him a Happy New Year, for I might not wake up first in the morning."

But in spite of trying hard to keep awake, sleep claimed him before long and he knew nothing more until he awoke in the dark and heard the clock strike five.

He crept softly out of bed and into his bathrobe and slippers. "I will creep downstairs," he thought, "and get the candy and into Uncle Jim's room and wish him a Happy New Year."

He slipped down the stairs without making a sound. It was dark in the hall and he ran against a table and stumbled over a chair, but at last he was safely in the dining room. His eyes were a little more used to the dim light now, and he was making his way toward the table, when all at once some one called, "Hello! Hello! Hello! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Oh, dear," whispered Robert, "and I meant to be the first to wish anyone a Happy New Year," but he called out, "Hello, Uncle Jim. I have the candy! Happy New Year."

"Hello! Hello!" answered the voice. "Where is the cracker?"

That didn't sound like Uncle Jim, and Robert was just getting ready to run back upstairs, when some one pressed the button and the room was full of light. There in the doorway stood mother and Uncle Jim.

"Happy New Year," they said. "We heard you downstairs, so we came to find you."

"But who spoke?" asked Robert, and just at that moment the voice came again. "Hello! Hello! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"It sounds like a parrot," said Uncle Jim, "but what would a parrot be doing here?"

They looked all around but there was nothing to be seen.

"Hello! Hello!" called the voice again.

"Oh, I see him," cried Robert, "right on top of the picture."

Mother and Uncle Jim looked where he was pointing, and there was a pretty green and yellow parrot swinging back and forth on the picture frame. "Hello!" he called, cocking his head on one side and looking at them.

Uncle Jim reached up and caught him.

"I wonder how he came here," said mother.

"I think I know," answered Uncle Jim. "I sat a while reading after you had all gone to bed. The room seemed close after being so long on board ship with the sea breezes, so I opened the window. The parrot must have gotten out of some house and seeing the open window flew in for warmth and shelter."

"Oh, mother, may we keep him?" asked Robert.

"If nobody claims him," answered mother.

Robert could not help hoping no one would, and no one did, although they inquired around the neighborhood and even advertised.

"I think he came a long way," said Uncle Jim, "and I think he came to be your New Year's present."

"I am going to call him one," said Robert. "I shall name him 'Happy New Year' and call him 'Happy' for short."



THE CROW'S NEST

By
WAITSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Text: Hold the traditions which ye have been taught.

—*Thessalonians 2:15*

HOLIDAYS always had a big place in the calendar of my family. We "kept" all the bright days from New Year's to New Year's, adding six birthdays and those of whatever "live stock" happened to be nearest and dearest. A Scotch terrier, a Jersey cow with a real black Jersey muzzle and the best cream in the county, and a pet Barred-llymouth-Rock hen enjoyed birthday celebrations with an extra fine bone, an extra helping of hay, and first chance at the table scraps, respectively. And besides these birthdays and legal holidays we had a lot of special family anniversaries — but it would be quite too personal to tell you what we celebrated or how we celebrated. I should have to know you by your first name before I could tell you.

I said that we kept all the regular holidays — what are called "legal holidays." But that doesn't mean that we kept them all as people usually do, because we lived on a farm and farming calls for the unusual — which is why some people don't like farming. So we might celebrate the Fourth of July with pitchforks instead of with firecrackers, and February twenty-second with ice-picks instead of with cardboard hatchets. You see, on a farm you must put your shoulder to the wheel that needs pushing — whether the town parades or not.

But one holiday which we always celebrated year after year in the same fashion was New Year's Eve. I wonder whether some of my readers might not like to know what we did and tell their fathers and mothers about it, because as the years go by I remember this holiday celebration above all the others and love it more and more. A poet once wrote:

"We paint bright pictures, looking backward"

and that is the truth with me as I look back toward the home days, and especially o New Year's Eve.

This is what we did. After an evening of reading aloud before the open fire, Mother would close the book and we four boys would go upstairs. (Mother always let us take our time on *this* evening.) Then all four of us would get into a big

sleigh bed (a double bed with ends that curved like the dashboard of a sleigh) and we would lie out straight, looking up at the ceiling. Then when we were all still, Mother would come up the stairs very quietly and stand under the hall light just outside our dark room. Then she would look in at us and open a book and read:

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
King, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go:
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

And how she could read! Sometimes I drew deep breaths and shivered with the great call and challenge of the poem; sometimes I lay with tears in my eyes, thinking of how bad I had been during the year; but Mother always read "Ring Out Wild Bells" like an angel in earnest — and I was always better for it, that night and for many days afterward. And though the years have put their heavy hand upon this custom they can only strengthen my memories, and through my memories strengthen me.



Marbles

By ELLA K. JELLIFFE

BOYS will be interested to know how marbles are made and how they got their name. As to the latter, it comes from the Latin word, *marmor*, which means marble, and it is probable that they were first made from marble though now they are made from baked clay, china, glass, and many kinds of stone.

I wish I could take a party of boys to the marble factory in Saxony, Germany, which supplies the United States and many other countries with great numbers of marbles. There they are made from a hard stone which is first broken up with a hammer into little square pieces; about one hundred of these pieces are put into a mill made of a fixed slab of stone full of little grooves and covered with a flat block of oak wood of the same size as the stone. This block of wood is made to revolve rapidly, and streams of water are kept running in the grooves to prevent the mill from getting too hot. It takes but a few minutes to grind the stones round and polish them.

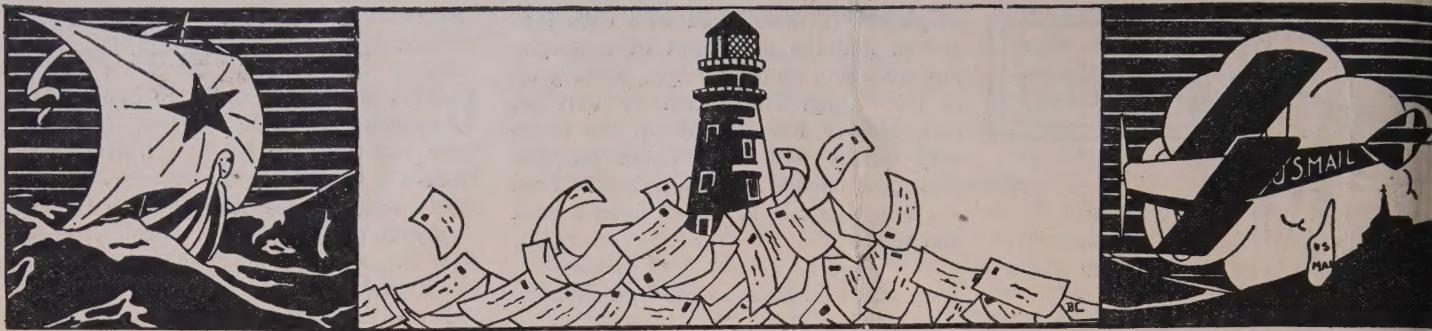
Marbles which are called "alleys" are made of china or of white marble. Real china marbles are made of fine clay and baked; some of these have a pearly glaze, others are painted in bright colors which do not rub off because the painting is done before baking.

Another kind of marbles called "agates" are made of glass. Clear glass marbles are made by taking up a little melted glass on the end of an iron rod and either dropping it into an iron mold which shapes it or whirling it round the head until the glass is made into a ball. Sometimes the figure of a dog or squirrel or some other animal is put on the end of the rod and when it is dipped into the melted glass, the glass flows all round it and when the marble is made, the animal is seen shut up in it. Colored glass marbles are made by holding a bunch of glass rods of different colors in the fire until they melt, then the workman twists them round into a ball or presses them in a mold, so that when done the marble is marked with bands and ribbons of color.

Careful Parents

By MATTIE LEE HAUSGEN

Father Drake defends his brood
From our Gyp, — in angry mood;
Mother Duck grim courage lacks
But she comforts them with quacks!
Well they know, as if she spoke,
Gyp intends it for a joke!



THE BEACON CLUB

THE EDITOR'S POST BOX

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 16 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

23 LEBANON ST.,
SANFORD, ME.

Dear Editor: I am a member of the Unitarian Sunday School of Sanford, Me. My minister's name is Rev. Harry Lutz. My teacher's name is Mrs. Richardson. I should like very much to become a member of the Club and wear a button. We get *The Beacon* every Sunday in our school. I like it very much. My mother is a teacher in Sunday School. I should like to have a girl my age (9 years) write to me.

Yours truly,
HELEN E. COBB.

UNDERWOOD, MINN.

Dear Editor: I should like to become a member of the Beacon Club. I am thirteen years old and am in the Junior class in Sunday School. I have a very kind Sunday-school teacher; her name is Miss Thelma Lein. Our pastor is Rev. Oswald E. Helsing. I read *The Beacon* every week. I like some of the stories very much.

Yours sincerely,
HILMA MOEN.

471 MONTGOMERY DRIVE,
PORTLAND, ORE.

Dear Editor: I should very much like to be a member of the Beacon Club and should like to wear its pin. I read *The Beacon* every Sunday. I go to the Unitarian Sunday School in Portland, Oregon. I am ten years old and will be eleven in February.

Yours sincerely,
HARRIET KISTNER.

1323 E. 5TH ST. SOUTH,
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Dear Editor: I am a member of the Unitarian Sunday School in Salt Lake City. I get *The Beacon* and enjoy it very much. I should very much like to join the club and wear the pin. I am twelve years old. I might try also to write some stories.

Yours truly,
VERA DAVIDSON.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

THE CUBS' COLUMN

Dear Cubs: The author of "Which Way Does the Wind Blow?", Irene Lewis, writes that she came from England four years ago, since which time she has been going to the Unitarian Sunday School in Lawrence, Mass.

Margaret Hall, whose story, "Saving a Bird's Life," also wins an award, lives in the interesting old town of Castine, Me., of which she tells us something in a letter soon to be published.

THE BEACON CLUB EDITOR.

Which Way Does the Wind Blow?

BY IRENE LEWIS

Which way does the wind blow?

Where does he go?

He rides o'er the water

And over the snow.

O'er wood and o'er valley

And over the height

Where goats cannot wander

He taketh his flight.

He rages and tosses

And bare is the tree,

As when we look upward

We plainly may see.

But from whence he cometh

Or whither he goes

There's no one can tell you,

There's no one that knows.

Saving a Bird's Life

BY MARGARET HALL (AGE 11)

One day my brother and I went over to our neighbor's house. My brother found a little female ruby-throated hummingbird that was almost dead. I took her home and mixed up some sugar and water and made a syrup. I fed it to her off the end of my finger. At first, she did not take very much at a time, but after a while she opened her eyes and took more. She was eating the syrup when all of a sudden she flew out of the basket and up to the top of the sun parlor, where I had her. We opened two windows and the outside door. After a while she flew out of one of the windows.

PUZZLERS

Enigma

I am composed of 32 letters and am a passage from the book of Joshua.

My 29, 30, 8, 9 is part of the body.

My 27, 23, 21, 20 is to melt.

My 12, 10, 11, 15, 14 is a garden implement.

My 1, 2, 19, 16, 6, 25, 15, 4, 22 is the day before.

My 17, 24, 31, 28 is a brave man.

My 3, 11, 5, 26 is to possess.

My 7, 18, 7, 32 is a number.

My 13, 21, 20 is a carpenter's tool.

J. A. N.

Anagram Verse

Yoln a gnith omfr lod ot ewn,
Noyl a plesse romf tnigh ot romn.
Het ewn si ubt het dol moce rute;
Chea rinssue esse a ewn erya obrn.

Twisted Capitals of States

1. Astan Ef.	6. Otsbno.
2. Aseml.	7. Imdaosn.
3. Jaosken.	8. Krafnorft.
4. Melobsuu.	9. Gusutsa.
5. Nvrede.	10. Slannig.

PRISCILLA PERSON

Answers to Puzzles in No. 11

Enigma.—New every year he comes
With tidings and a song.

Pied Words.—I. Quassia. II. President.

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